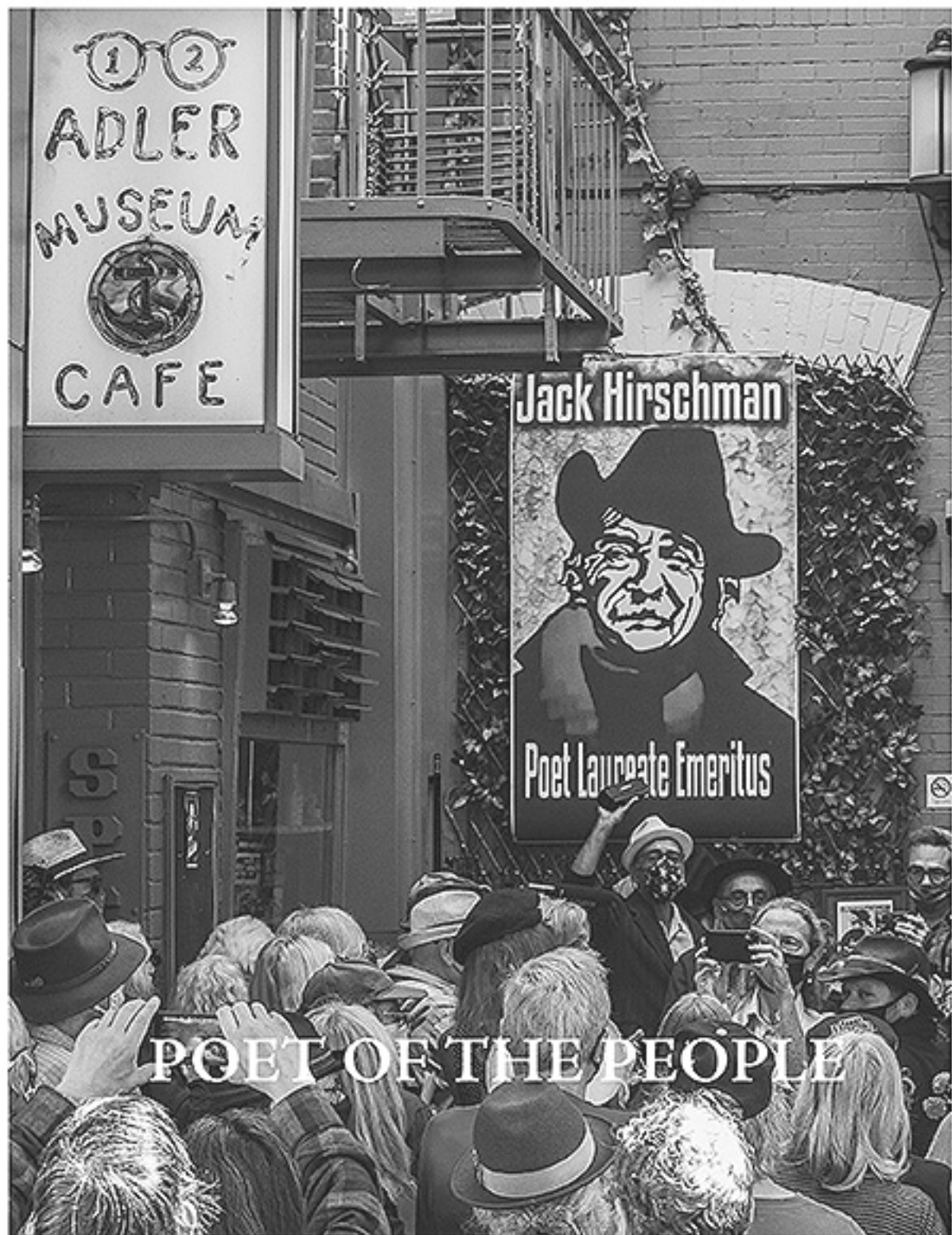


The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Issue 235

Fall 2021



POET OF THE PEOPLE

REPLENISH, NEW MISSION-DRIVEN GROCERS, OPENS IN NORTH BEACH

by Cap Caplan, Semaphore Editor
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If you are an open water swimmer or a fan of the sport, meet Erika Gliebe, a Bay Area marathon swimmer and founder and owner of Replenish Grocers.

Growing up as a surfer in San Diego and swimming miles and miles of the ocean and bay, Erika early on encountered miles and miles of something else: Plastic. Plastic wrap. Plastic bags. Plastic toys. Plastic debris.

In her extensive travels for work and in her own pursuit of her sport, Erika became more and more distressed by the plastic pollution problem she saw. The more she learned about the detrimental impact of petroleum's byproducts, the more she determined to do something about it.

"I began by recognizing how much waste I was producing, even on business trips, so I started carrying my own water bottle, coffee mug, and utensils. I found Stasher silicone storage bags and put snacks in them, eliminating packaged food at airports.

"I eventually forced myself to sit down in an establishment that offered reusable plates, cups, and cutlery vs. my 'grab to go' travel routine. Sometimes, we just need to slow down to make more sustainable choices."

Making changes in her home came next. Erika started with the kitchen. Soda Stream replaced the bottles of bubbly water she purchased in quantity each week. She found beeswax wraps, substituting them for plastic wrap, reusable (instead of single-use) stainless-steel pods, and more of those silicone containers. She took an even bigger step going from paper to cloth towels.

She then tackled the bathroom. She swapped out her plastic toothbrush for one with boar's head bristles. She switched to bar soap shampoo and conditioner. Toothpaste tabs. A metal safety razor.

Erika began frequenting farmers' markets and shopping from bulk food stores where she could bring her own bottles, jars, and bags to refill food, cleaning, and personal care items. And, over time, she saw the impact of her efforts. The amount she deposited in the trash grew less.

She went further, trying to live a zero-waste life, attempting to eliminate her household's consumption of items, even like paper, its residue ultimately going into the earth. She was partially successful—and terribly frustrated by the impossibility of that zero objective, never feeling like she had done enough.

She was stuck.

Happily, she came across a statement by Anne Marie Bonneau, the "zero-waste chef" as she is known on the web.

"We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly."

Erika got it! Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. She was back on track, considering more about how far she wanted to go in her aspiration of low waste living, both for herself and for others.

"I want to change the narrative from zero waste," said Erika. "I want to transform the conversation to low



Erika and her team.

© DAVID LIPKIN

waste, which is easily achievable by all. This is a journey that anyone can start. And at Replenish Grocers, we will welcome anyone on this journey whether on Day 1, Day 1,000, or Day 10,000."

She spent the next few years researching and carefully vetting products. When she was on a work trip, she visited zero waste shops in Seattle, Brooklyn, Boise. She kept waiting for one to open here.

In a glorious step she shares in conversation and on Replenish Grocers' website, she tells how she was sitting with friends after a cold swim in the women's sauna at the South End Rowing Club, discussing her ideas, brainstorming together on store names. And that is when Replenish Grocers was born!

"During the pandemic, it became more important to do something I was passionate about. I started working on a business plan. Once the name 'Replenish Grocers' came to be, it was easy to start working on my dream. First, I worked on the logo with Amy Young Design. Next was looking at spaces and then working with architects and, finally, the contractors."

Entering Replenish Grocers at 968 Columbus, with its brightly colored murals, high ceilings, and shining lights, is energizing. It's also engaging and enlightening. A sustainability tutorial. Everywhere there are notes and signs not only identifying an item and its manufacturer but explaining its selection as less impactful on waste and climate. Through its carefully curated products and information about them, Replenish Grocers helps one to consider: "What can I

buy that will not only meet my need but lessen its footprint as I use or am done with it? How can it become one fewer throwaway in a landfill or the sea?"

For a small store, the variety Replenish Grocers stocks is impressive. A friend told me he counted 139 mounted bulk containers of food stuffs, from pastas to beans, cereals to coffees, snacks, nuts, and more. His favorite, luscious dark chocolate malted milk balls, came from a separate (and, oh so close by) stack of bins.

On shelves, there are laundry products, easily dispensed. A separate section of personal items: shampoo and conditioner bars, lotions, brushes, lip balms. An array of cleaning products. Containers of all kinds and make—save plastic.

The shop also stocks fresh organic produce, of high quality and attractively displayed. I've tried most all and just bought my third bunch of small biodynamic grapes.

Reducing plastic use is only one of Replenish Grocers' missions.

A poster on a sidewall reads, "Replenish Grocers is committed to offering as much information as possible about the products we sell so you can make informed choices."

A labeling guide offers colored-coded graphics for

- Within 200 Miles
- Within CA
- Women Owned
- Minority Owned
- Certified B Corporation
- Fair Trade
- Zero Waste
- Vegan

Those same labels show up on the shelves under the identified products.

Erika's concern for the earth and its inhabitants is evidenced even in small ways.

As Judy Irving and I visited Replenish during its soft opening, Erika showed us the six brands of coffee (all local) the store was stocking. Judy remarked about the loss of habitat birds suffer when coffee plantations replace trees and suggested that she add "shade-grown coffee." Erika took note, sourcing special producers. By the time we next visited, during the store's grand opening, a new supplier had joined the others on the shelf: SongBird coffee, proudly displaying "Smithsonian BIRD FRIENDLY" on its label.

North Beach now has a grocery for all of us, even the birds.

Welcome, Replenish Grocers!

Replenish Grocers

968 Columbus Ave. (betw. Chestnut and Lombard)
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Shoppers at the grand opening.

© JUDY IRVING



"For the Birds!"

© CAP CAPLAN



A Cornucopia of natural foods.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Al Fontes
President@THD.org

Shared Spaces

To live in a large, dense city like San Francisco is to be surrounded by people. Indeed, many of us live here because the so-called “magic of the city” keeps us feeling vibrant, part of a society, members of a community. And because we are present together in this living, breathing community, our built environment works best when it unites us and doesn’t compartmentalize us. Sidewalks and streets have a life of their own when they are open and welcoming.

We’ve all seen examples of sidewalk-killing architecture: monolithic walls made of artificial materials, minimal windows, where people inside a building are completely isolated from those outside. A local example of this is the Columbus Avenue facade of the North Beach Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, a massive stone wall that resembles a dam, bathes pedestrians in hot, stark sunlight, and seems to say, “Keep moving, you’re not welcome here.”

As a result of changes brought on by the pandemic, we are at a turning point in how our neighborhood will evolve. The Shared Spaces program, recently made permanent by legislation signed in July, presents us with a set of choices. Originally implemented to allow people to eat outside and reduce transmission of the virus, these spaces saved many local businesses and demonstrated that outdoor public spaces can be enchanting places that bring people together.

Now the question is: How will these spaces be implemented? Will our streets be encased in walls built of plywood boxes, or will they feel more like an urban center somewhere in Europe? We’re at a point where we are beginning to make these choices.

If Shared Spaces is done right, it can promote a sense of community and openness. When you are outside, seated at a table on the sidewalk or street, you become part of the flow that is civil society. Rather than a static, enclosed collection of people sitting in their chairs, these spaces should be fluid and dynamic, creating porous borders rather than barriers. They should present places for all to gather rather than establish a rigid divide between public and private space.

On the THD website (<https://thd.org/shared>), you can see a set of recommendations that constitute our first attempt at defining what we think will make Shared Spaces successful. Many of those recommendations focus on opening the urban environment to all, keeping a reasonable limit on privatization, and directing the evolution of our neighborhood as these spaces become permanent.

The Shared Spaces legislation was passed with a degree of urgency, as the pandemic continues to present a real challenge for local businesses. As such, many of the implementation details still need to be worked out, and THD will play an active role in promoting policies that foster everything we love about North Beach and Telegraph Hill: its beauty, its uniqueness, and its humanity.

Congestion Pricing

As anyone who lives here knows, a community includes those who live here but also those who come to share our home with us. We have always considered ourselves as stewards, with the understanding that our neighborhood is among the best reasons for someone to come to San Francisco, whether visiting from Paris, France, or the Central Valley.



Green Street—closed spaces.

© AL FONTES

SHARED SPACES, CONGESTION PRICING



Green Street—open spaces.

© AL FONTES

When someone visits your house, you don’t take a picture of your guest’s credit card and use the number to extract money from that individual. And yet, that’s similar to what the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is planning to do to those who visit us, with a program called “Congestion Pricing.”

This program proposes to designate a large area in the northeast quadrant of San Francisco as a congestion pricing zone. When someone crosses the area’s border during rush hour, an automated license plate reader would record that movement and the owner of that vehicle would be sent a bill. Currently, two areas are under consideration, both of which include much of the City east of Van Ness.

The exact rules are still in formulation, including the area involved, the specific hours, and the way to charge people (i.e., as they enter, as they exit, or both). The simplest proposal is to charge \$6.50 each time a vehicle enters the area when congestion pricing is active.

Our initial response to this plan has been a letter outlining our concerns and recommendations going forward, delivered via email. You can read the text of the letter and see other resources at <https://thd.org/congestion>. It has been co-signed by the North Beach Business Association, Russian Hill Community Association, Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association, Discover Polk Community Benefit District, and the Nob Hill Association. We are excited to be working with these local groups, all of which genuinely share our concerns.

For decades, THD has supported Transit First policies in San Francisco and continues to do so. And there is no question that prior to the pandemic, traffic congestion was a terrible problem downtown. However, we have many concerns about the program currently under consideration.

It seems obvious that charging a fee to people who drive downtown will have an adverse impact on local businesses. To charge people for the simple act of visiting a certain neighborhood is to tell them to stay away. Such an unwelcoming attitude affects not only those in the congestion pricing zone but also those in the surrounding areas. Our local businesses depend on a diverse customer base that includes many people who live outside the City and for whom public transit is not an option.

By our estimates, those who are affected will pay hundreds of millions of dollars per year. However, SFCTA hasn’t adequately analyzed whether or not the benefits of such a program would justify this enormous cost. Nor has SFCTA explained very well how much of that money, if any, will go to improve BART and/or Muni. Furthermore, we have not seen very much consideration given to other approaches to reducing downtown congestion, such as raising parking fees or promoting carpooling.

A common response from people who hear about

this proposal is, “Why don’t they fix Muni first?” This is a fair question, and we’re still waiting for Muni to become a fast, safe, reliable alternative to driving a car. Until that happens, it seems premature to punish people for making what is basically a rational decision: Wait 30 minutes for a bus that might never come or reach for the car keys and get on with your life.

The congestion pricing program also raises questions of equity, as the proposed fee is pretty onerous for anyone living on a low income. The program attempts to address this by allowing low-income drivers to apply for a discount. But this forces people to share personal information about themselves, including how much money they have. Those who don’t make a lot of money can reasonably ask why they are suddenly expected to hand over sensitive personal information to the transit system, just to use streets that they’ve already paid for with their taxes.

But the attack on privacy would actually be much more widespread than this, as a network of computer-operated cameras would be deployed at some of our busiest streets to take pictures of every vehicle that passes by. In all likelihood, these cameras will also get images of vehicles’ occupants, and these pictures will be shared in real time with law enforcement.

We will continue to express our concerns with the congestion pricing proposals and attempt to share those with SFCTA. So far, outreach to northeastern neighborhood organizations has been lacking, although we represent those who would be most impacted by this program. Going forward, THD will continue to engage with SFCTA and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and advocate for the interests of our friends and neighbors.



Facade of the SF Public Library on Columbus Avenue.

© AL FONTES



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

by Nancy Shanahan, Stan Hayes, and Mary Lipian,
Committee Co-Chairs
PZ@thd.org

As we head into the Fall, here are some of the projects on the Planning & Zoning Committee's busy schedule:

955 Sansome. An 84-foot, eight-story, mixed use building (24 residential units plus three stories of office use) is proposed to replace a two-story garage at the corner of Sansome and Vallejo Streets within the Northeast Waterfront Historic District. Because the developer declined our invitation to attend the P&Z Committee meeting in June, the Committee evaluated the project in his absence. A THD comment letter strongly opposing the project was sent to the project developer. THD is committed to working with the project sponsor and architect to reduce the height and bulk of this proposal for compatibility with the historic district and adjacent residential area.

425 Broadway. At a P&Z Committee meeting, the project developer presented a slightly updated design of a proposed 65-foot, seven-story, 41-unit residential/office two-building complex, including three below market rate (BMR) units. The proposed new buildings would replace the existing parking garage lot on the south side of Broadway and the vacant parking lot on Montgomery. Under the State Density Bonus program, the developer is requesting four waivers (including a waiver from the height limit). A THD comment letter opposing the project as proposed was sent to the project developer. The Planning Commission was scheduled to review the project in mid-October, as this report was being written. See more information about this proposal on THD's website (<https://www.thd.org/bonus>).

659 Union (Verdi Building). The project developer has submitted an application to the Planning

Department to develop 23 residential units, including two BMR units. Under the State Density Bonus program, the developer is seeking two incentives (including a rooftop restaurant) and waivers of Planning Code controls for height, dwelling unit exposure, open space, rear yard, and size of non-residential uses. The developer held a code-required Pre-Application Meeting at the end of August at which there were a number of questions asked and comments made by THD P&Z Committee members and other participants. The Planning Department is not currently processing the application until fee back-payments are made and other technical documents are submitted. See additional information about this proposal on THD's website (<https://www.thd.org/bonus>).

535 Green (Buon Gusto Sausage Factory). A 63-ft, six-story, 34-unit residential/commercial building is still pending approvals on the site of the National Register-listed Buon Gusto Sausage Factory Building and the vacant parking lot to the east. With proposals using the State Density Bonus program, the new building would reach up to 79 feet at the highest point of roof-top features—twice the 40-foot height limit in North Beach. See additional information about this proposal on THD's website (<https://www.thd.org/bonus>).

875 Sansome. The developer is proposing to demolish the existing building and construct a new 65-foot, six-story mixed use building with three floors of office, ground floor retail, and nine dwelling units, including only one BMR unit.

Shared Spaces. A position statement making a number of THD recommendations regarding Shared Spaces was submitted to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The Mayor's Shared Spaces legislation was heard by the BOS Land Use & Transportation Committee and the full BOS in July. The President's column discusses THD's recommendations in greater detail.

P&Z'S HEAVY WORKLOAD CONTINUES

Congestion Pricing. A letter to the San Francisco County Transit Authority (SFCTA) setting forth concerns with a proposed congestion pricing program was drafted and distributed to potential co-signers. Thus far, in addition to THD, the North Beach Business Association, the Russian Hill Community Association, the Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association, the Discover Polk Community Benefit District, and the Nob Hill Association have agreed to sign. Because SFCTA recently revised its congestion pricing program and extended it into next year, a revised version of the letter was prepared and circulated to co-signers for concurrence. See the President's column for a discussion of the questions raised by the proposed congestion pricing program.

Planning Commission rules amendments. After multiple continuances, in July, the Planning Commission again considered proposed amendments to the Commission's rules and regulations regarding Discretionary Review (DR). Originally, the Commission had proposed to reduce the DR presentation period from five to three minutes and to eliminate the rebuttal period. THD argued that the proposed amendments, if accepted, would make the presentation so short that it would amount to a de facto denial of due process. At the July hearing, THD testified in support of the Commission's revised proposal to retain the five-minute DR presentation period and two-minute rebuttal for Neighborhood Group Organizations, and we recommended that it should remain applicable to all DR requestors. The Commission continued the matter again to August, where the item was continued indefinitely, leaving the current DR process unchanged.

To join, or to get information from, the THD Planning & Zoning Committee, just send an email to PZ@THD.org.



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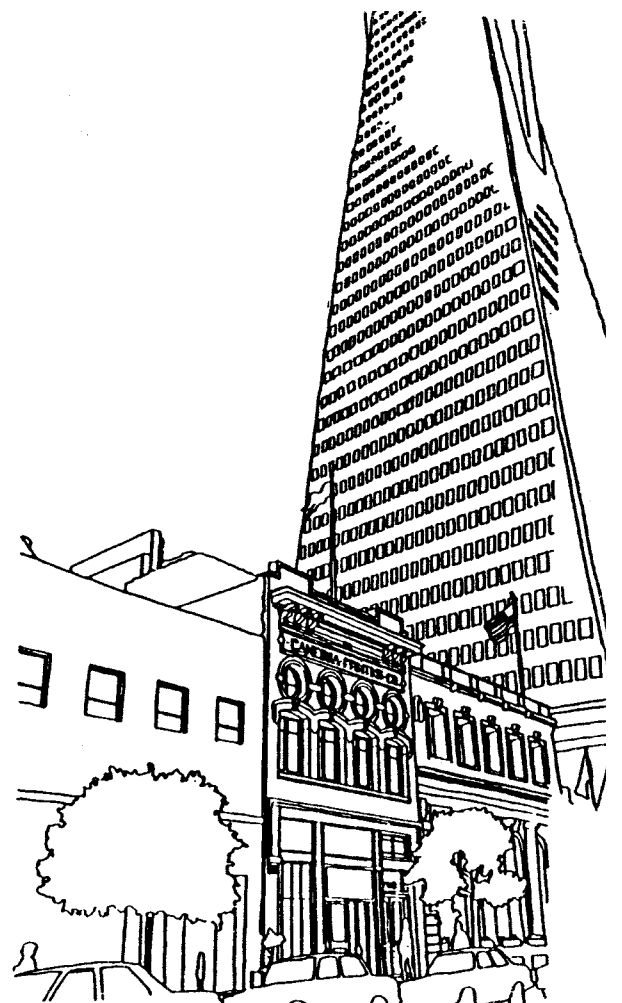
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DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR REPORT

by Supervisor Aaron Peskin
aaron.peskin@sfgov.org

The District 3 Office is firing with all engines, with a myriad of legislative and community-building projects underway. Read on—and stay in touch by checking out official communications, legislative updates, and newsletters on our official District 3 website at <https://sfbos.org/supervisor-peskin>.

Hearings at Committee

This Fall, I am convening a series of hearings on short term rental and corporate rental impacts and enforcement updates; street tree maintenance and urban canopy expansion (thanks to Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its input!); reform of the City’s role in residential waste collection and rate setting in the wake of the Recology scandal; the recent controversial restructuring of the Planning Department with an emphasis on the independence of the Zoning Administrator’s role; restructure and reform of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office; the seismic retrofit of the Millennium Tower, which has continued to sink and tilt as a result of the Department of Building Inspection’s (DBI)-approved “fix;” and a hearing to receive a general audit of DBI permitting with recommendations on structural governance reforms to combat corruption.

Pending Legislation

We have pending legislation to address everything from fire safety and sprinkler system requirements in older high-rise buildings to Neighborhood Commercial District legislation to protect small and Legacy Businesses.

I’m also working on a Charter Amendment to reform DBI itself with Supervisors Melgar and Ronen, in an attempt to streamline archaic permitting processes and address the rampant corruption within the Department. I also have legislation pending to address San Francisco’s unbridled pay-to-play culture across Departments, by prohibiting City Commissioners and Department heads, including members of permit-issuing departments like the Planning Department and DBI, from seeking contributions such as gifts or other “charitable” donations from conflicted parties.

Finally, I am working on legislation to address

loopholes in interpretations of the Planning Code that allow for new market rate “group housing” projects (i.e., efficiency units without adequate amenities) in the already dense neighborhoods of the Tenderloin and Chinatown, where residents have long requested density equity and access to family-friendly housing.

Neighborhood Announcements

Earlier this autumn, we celebrated the two-year anniversary of North Beach Family Café at 362 Columbus Avenue, with taiko drummers and a sake ceremony. We also welcomed the woman-owned sustainable and eco-friendly grocery store, Replenish Grocers, at 968 Columbus Avenue, across from Cobb’s Comedy Club, so please check out this low-waste small business model that is inspiring us all to meet our Plastic Free Initiative goals!

Thank you to all the Telegraph Hill Dwellers who purchased tickets to the inaugural season of The 7 Fingers circus arts company’s much-anticipated acrobatic production, “Dear San Francisco: A High-Flying Love Story” at the newly renovated Club Fugazi. My staff and I worked for months with the SF Italian Community Services and The 7 Fingers production team and talent to ensure that Club Fugazi would not sit vacant and that future programming would continue in the proud tradition of Beach Blanket Babylon’s unique only-in-San Francisco performance arts and nightlife legacy. It is an incredible show, so please check it out!

We also completed the construction and build-out of the Jefferson Streetscape Project at Fisherman’s Wharf, which includes new guard railings and pedestrian boulevard streetscaping to help revitalize this international tourist destination. Finally, our office was proud to join the SF Italian Athletic Club, the Salesian Boys & Girls Club, and Central Station’s police officers to clean up graffiti and repaint Italian flag bands on approximately 110 poles throughout North Beach, just in time for Fleet Week and the Italian Heritage Parade.

Farewells: “Poet’s Poet” Jack Hirschman & “Reporter’s Reporter” Barbara Taylor

We bid farewell to our friend and neighbor, lifelong North Beach poet activist, Jack Hirschman, with a community celebration of his life and inspiring legacy.

Jack’s widow, Aggie, and his beloved community of artists and rabble-rousers created a beautiful community altar at Specs’ to which you are invited to contribute. My Chief of Staff, Sunny Angulo, happened to be in Paris when Jack passed and was able to ferry back a special, touching handwritten condolence note from Shakespeare & Co. sister bookstore owner Sylvia Whitman. After adding the note to the community altar, we joined Aggie and friends in a Second Line procession from Specs’ to Caffè Trieste, and then we all ended up in Washington Square, where I had the honor of presenting a proclamation outlining Jack’s many contributions to arts, culture, and North Beach civic life—from advocating for the homeless to protecting mom & pop small businesses from formula retail chains. It was a hot day in the City, but friends and admirers still spilled into the Park in black trench coats and Jack’s trademark bright red scarf.

Jack, you told us to get a broken heart in your eternal poem, “The Path,” and with every loss of a beloved artist, creative, or neighborhood character, I think we can all affirm that we’ve had enough broken hearts to populate a life. Rest in power, old friend.

I also had the honor of offering a eulogy at the memorial service of legendary reporter and longtime KCBS City Hall Bureau Chief Barbara Taylor. “BT,” as she was known to friends, was a staple of civic life for more than 30 years, covering City Hall politics with integrity, fairness, and aggressive accuracy across seven different mayoral administrations, until her retirement in 2015, earning her the mantle of “Dean of the City Hall Press Corps.” It was an honor to introduce legislation to name the City Hall Press Room after my dear friend, Barbara Ann Taylor, whose professionalism and craft are unmatched to this day. Rest in peace, BT.

See you in the neighborhood,
Aaron



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Issue #235 • Fall 2021



PARKS & TREES REPORT

by Lance Carnes, Guest Columnist

The City's 1.3-million-dollar maintenance budget is just enough to cover the watering of the 2,200 new trees planted annually. However, only half of those trees are being serviced due to watering crew mismanagement. Trees not watered do not establish well or die and must be removed and replaced.

In North Beach, we have 72 newly planted trees needing weekly watering. I've been auditing a 20-tree sample each Tuesday, just after the crew from the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Urban Forestry (BUF) finishes its run. The result: Fewer than half are watered. (I'm not an arborist, but it takes no special training to distinguish between a full water bag, weighing about 170 lbs, and an empty one.)

On two occasions, June 1 and June 8, 2021, all 20 trees were watered. That's how it's supposed to work. I've asked BUF Superintendent, Carla Short, to assign that crew to North Beach permanently, but it hasn't happened. We still have the crew that waters only half the trees.

Other Trees in the City

What I've found in North Beach seems to be the norm throughout the City.

The Guerrero Street median, from Duboce Avenue to 21st Street in the Mission, with 14 trees and 65 landscape plants, was promoted as a signature landscaping project. When I started auditing this planting in May 2021, trees were not being watered, and the landscape plantings were watered infrequently. By July 2021, all BUF watering had ceased, despite the drought and higher air temperatures. The result is that the medians look untended, and many landscape plants have died.

(There is one block on Guerrero between 19th and 20th Streets that is a model of how the median should look; however, this stretch is maintained by a dedicated resident.)

In Japantown, on the 1800 block of Sutter Street, where the cherry blossom trees were recently replanted, there are several other street trees that are not watered and look unhealthy. And a friend who lives at the west side of the Richmond District reports that there are a number of dead young trees near his home, sadly with their stakes intact and empty water bags.

Mission Verde

This project is one shining example of newly planted trees that are well-watered and well-maintained. It's a neighborhood volunteer effort for about 150 newly planted trees along 24th Street and on side streets. There are more than 70 volunteers who water weekly, using 30-gallon water tanks mounted on pushcarts.

The new trees in the neighborhood were planted by the City and Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) with the agreement that residents would water the trees, 20 gallons per tree per week, for three years. As a volunteer with Mission Verde, I can attest to the dedi-

STREET TREE SAGA



Enlisting the next generation.

© LANCE CARNES

cation of the resident watering teams.

So the job can be done with just a modicum of effort. But in North Beach and other parts of the City, BUF watering crews (who use trucks carrying large tanks) are delivering perhaps *half* the water the City insists Mission Verde must provide and the bureau's own publicity *says* it provides.

Other Abuses

Without proper watering, many newly planted trees have to be taken out. Under San Francisco law governing the Department of Public Works and BUF, whenever a street tree is posted for removal, the public must be notified, and if a removal is protested, a Public Works hearing must be set. The public may attend and argue against removal.

In 2019, BUF adopted a new "24-Hour Emergency Tree Removal" notice. Printed on the bottom of the notice is "This notice cannot be protested." While most tree removals are also posted online by BUF, these new notices are paper postings on trees only. The only other way of learning of "24-Hour" postings is to put in a Public Records request.

During one period in the summer of 2020, the number of these postings was three times the number of regular removal notifications. In other words, three out of four street tree removals were done with little prior public awareness. (Of the 60 trees with "24-Hour" notices, more than half were still standing two months after posting, and a few of them were still in place more than a year later. But that's another issue for another time.)

The problem here is not so much the elimination of the right of appeal (though it is contrary to law). Who's going to protest the

removal of a small dead tree? The practical effect of this change, however, is to mask the extent of the waste being incurred by the poor watering practices of BUF. How much is the City spending having to replant trees needlessly and paying watering crews doing only half their work?

What Can the Public Do?

BUF has the resources to do the job, one it requires of the Mission Verde watering crews. We need to encourage our Supervisors to help get BUF back on track, demanding the same high level of performance from its crews in our neighborhoods.

However, our representatives can't do this without knowing the facts on the ground. And that's where you come in. If you notice a newly planted tree not being watered on a regular basis, report this via 311 (category "Tree Maintenance"), providing as much information as you can (location, times at which waterings were missed). You might even send a letter to City Hall. The Mayor is unlikely ever to see it. But it's going to catch someone's attention at BUF when forwarded with a memo, "From the Office of the Mayor," attached.

Alternatively, if fighting the bureaucracy is not your thing, you might consider organizing or joining a volunteer effort on the model of Mission Verde (*MissionVerde.org*) or Friends of the Urban Forest (*fuf.net*).

It doesn't take that much work and can be most gratifying.

With the climate crisis upon us and San Francisco with the smallest tree canopy of any major US city (we at 13% and Los Angeles over 20%), we really have no choice but to get as many trees as feasible added to our urban forest. And it's in our hands to see that it happens.

(More info at saveSFTrees.org/water)



Adding another water bag.

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Water bag in place.

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SOCIAL & PROGRAM REPORT

by Kate Kaehler, Committee Chair
kate.kaehler@thd.org

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers Social Committee has had a very busy schedule, with events bringing our neighbors closer together—at a distance, of course!

We had our first neighborhood meetup in September, with about 40 of our members in attendance at our first live event since 2020! We enjoyed a raffle, wine, and snacks in the garden at Belle Cora restaurant and bar.

In October, we also welcomed “The 7 Fingers” circus group to our neighborhood with a special friends & family showing of “Dear San Francisco: A High-Flying Love Story.” We reserved the Tiara Balcony, the private box above the stage with breathtaking views of the aerial stunts performers displayed. The matinee and evening performances were well attended. Members also enjoyed a happy hour hosted by our friends at Chief Sullivan’s before the evening show. If you missed our outing and are interested in attending, tickets are on sale now at <https://www.clubfugazisf.com/dear-san-francisco>.

Social Events to Mark on Your Calendar

Remember to join us at the North Beach Farmers Market every Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm at Columbus Avenue & Greenwich Street, where you’ll find local

FROM THE EDITORS

by Cap Caplan and Judy Irving

Just returned from opening night of The 7 Fingers’ production, “Dear San Francisco: A High-Flying Love Story” at Club Fugazi.

WOW!



NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT REPORT

by Nick Ferris, Committee Chair
nick.ferris@thd.org

Telegraph Hill Dwellers organized a city-wide virtual conversation with District Attorney Chesa Boudin and Chief of Police Bill Scott. Moderated by Joe Eskenazi of *Mission Local* on August 16, the session looked at the current state of public safety and the relationship between the police department and district attorney’s office, as well as offering an opportunity for attendees to ask questions of these city leaders.

What seemed abundantly clear is the close relationship and respect Chief Scott and DA Boudin share for each other. Repeatedly throughout the conversation, the District Attorney and Police Chief emphasized the need for working together. “Our Offices depend on each other,” said DA Boudin, adding that he also

bakers, produce, coffee, musicians, artisans, and more!

Neighborhood Meetup: First Thursday of the Month—Join THD board members at a neighborhood meetup on the first Thursday of every month. This month, we will gather outside at Piazza Pellegrini on **November 4** from **5 to 7 pm**. Come grab a bite and a drink and meet your neighbors! Look out for the bright green THD tablecloth.

Holiday Party

We are making tentative plans to host a holiday party this year for our members, with an ear to the ground on the latest guidance on hosting indoor events, of course. Mark your calendars for **Thursday, December 9**, and keep an eye on your email for forthcoming information about the time and location.

Check out our new Events Calendar

Check out our brand new social calendar, on which we are displaying all neighborhood and THD-sponsored social events. Find it on the THD website at <https://www.thd.org/social-calendar>.

Join the THD Social Committee

We would love your help in planning THD social events. To join the committee or volunteer for a specific activity, please visit www.thd.org/join. Just fill out the quick form under the Volunteer section. Or you can email me directly at kate.kaehler@thd.org. We will reach out to you right away, as we look forward to planning many more great events!



Crowd enjoying “The Princess Diaries,” filmed in San Francisco.

© HOWARD WONG

understood they don’t necessarily agree on everything. (The District Attorney would like to see more evidence from the police in order to make convictions, and the police would like more cases prosecuted.) In the end, both sides seemed to understand this tension is natural and perhaps inevitable.

A common sentiment from audience questions was that crime has increased greatly over the past year, but the Police Chief and DA said the statistics told another story. According to Chief Scott, overall crime, and particularly violent crime, is down in comparison to 2020, 2019, and 2018, but he quickly acknowledged car break-ins and several other types of nonviolent crimes have increased during the pandemic.

Many critics of the DA cite a lack of desire to prosecute various nonviolent crimes and blame him for increases in crime and a general decline in public safety. While during his campaign he might have evidenced a desire to shift the types of crimes prosecuted, it appears the DA has moderated his stance. In 2021, when police brought arrests in burglary cases, the DA’s office filed charges in more than 80% of cases. Additionally, when there have been robbery arrests, more than 70% of

cases were prosecuted.

Some believe in the statistics, while others feel crimes are grossly underreported. What does seem apparent is that crime has gone both up and down, depending on its type. The Police Chief and DA are working in lockstep to make San Francisco a better place.

One takeaway from the discussion was the importance of enlisting the public’s help in making sure all crimes are reported. Both speakers emphasized the need for providing evidence. If your car or home is broken into, report it, and ask the police to clean for fingerprints. All this can go a long way in helping the police investigate, build evidence, and present cases to the District Attorney who can then better prosecute crimes.

Thank you to all who attended this virtual event. We had 238 neighbors, which made it our second largest virtual event to date. We look forward to hosting more of these and are always looking for suggestions on relevant topics, so if you have any ideas, please reach out to me at nick.ferris@thd.org. If you missed this conversation or would like to watch it again, please go to www.thd.org/event-series.





Jack Hirschman memorial display, Live Worms Gallery.

© CHARLES VERSAGGI

by Charles Versaggi

A small group of people stood outside the Live Worms Gallery on Grant Avenue, looking at the window shrine of an elderly man meticulously organized in his memory. “I don’t know who he is,” a middle-aged woman remarked studying the display of memorabilia. “He must’ve been an important person.”

Centered midst an array of books, writings, and personal artifacts was a portrait of Jack Hirschman—his toothless smile, push-broom moustache, and furrowed face, framed by scruffy strands of gray hair, beamed wise-eyed his passion for poetry as a voice for humanity and the impoverished working class.

On August 22, at home minutes before speaking online to the *World Poetry Movement*, realizing a verse from one of his poems, “One Day,” the peripatetic street poet and social activist suddenly gave up breathing and just died at the age of 87—six months after the death of his close friend, Lawrence Ferlinghetti—reportedly from Covid-19.

Hirschman has been described as a poet, a man of fierce principle, a rabble-rouser, communist, someone who left a comfortable life as an academic to join militant protests against the Vietnam War and never looked back. He didn’t just read his poetry, he performed it with a distinctively deep, baritone voice—“the way the heart is supposed to hear it.”

Recognizable by his long black coat, wide-brimmed floppy hat, and red scarf, you could often find him at Specs’ Twelve Adler Museum Café, Vesuvio’s, and Caffé Trieste. But Hirschman wasn’t the Bohemian stereotype who hung out at bars and coffee houses. He had a tremendous work ethic, living in a single room in the hotel above the Caffé Trieste, writing and translating in nine languages, even after moving into a cottage behind an apartment after his marriage with Swedish poet and painter Agneta “Aggie” Falk.

“Jack had such a work discipline. A lot of people thought he hung out in bars. He didn’t. He was a work horse. He would go to Specs’ and Caffé Trieste, have



Jack Hirschman at Caffé Trieste.

© CHRISTOPHER MICHEL (WIKICOMMONS)

breakfast in the morning, and have a double espresso and bagel and cream cheese, and go to work,” Falk said.

“No matter who he was talking to, Hirschman made you feel you were the most important person in the room,” said Robert Carlson, who was the North Beach branch manager of the San Francisco Public Library, now manager of the Presidio branch of the library. “For me—a lot of people say this—he was almost like a father.”

“When I got to North Beach from New York circa 1999, he was THE person to speak to

about the local poetry scene,” added Carlson. Over 20 years, Hirschman participated in poetry readings Carlson organized at various library branches. “Just a few days ago, Aggie, myself, and several close friends spent the day cleaning out his studio above Caffé Trieste—so many manuscripts and work to sort.”

He was a prolific writer who wrote and translated more than 100 volumes of poetry and essays, notably *The Arcanes*—three volumes, one thousand pages each, comprising 126 long poems spanning 34 years. A fourth volume is slated for publication later this year.

“Jack Hirschman was that rare individual who was gifted in uniting the messianic tradition of spirit with the contemporary movements for liberation of the mind and flesh in words that instilled hope and courage,” said Scott Thompson, a close friend, poet, and editor.

Appointed San Francisco’s fourth Poet Laureate by Mayor Gavin Newsom in 2006, Hirschman was “the poet of the people.” “I’ve never seen such an outpouring for a writer,” said Falk, who knew him for many years as a close friend of her husband who died in 1990. Hirschman and Falk fell in love and married in 1999. “I can’t begin to tell you all the tributes that have come from France, Portugal, Italy, Colombia, and India—all over the world. What he gave out, it’s all coming back to him—they just loved him.”

Although Hirschman was lauded abroad as the “Dean of Marxist Poetry,” beyond the San Francisco literary scene and the North Beach circle of artists, he was largely unknown in this country. His global reach was due to the impact of his poetry that was translated into multiple languages. “People loved him and his work as a humanist, and they immediately wanted to translate it,” Falk explained.

“He was loved, admired, respected all over the world—he was a poet of the world, for the world,” said Devorah Major, San Francisco’s third Poet Laureate and senior adjunct professor at the California College of the Arts. “The U.S. has limited respect for artists and not very much for poets at all. Jack wrote from the people, for the people, so when it was translated, they could feel it in their hearts and in their bones.”

Hirschman created a poetry of love and revolution that spoke to everyone regardless of political and cultural differences. “I believe all poetry is propaganda. I don’t believe there’s a negative association to the word. A love poem is a propaganda for love. And I’ve done a lot of propaganda in my life,” he once said in an interview.

“He had an international view of politics, racial equality, and egalitarianism that he fostered through his incredible translations with folks around the world,” said Matt Gonzalez, Chief Attorney at the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office, former president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and a close friend who co-wrote with Hirschman an online biography of the poet. “He didn’t suck up to authority or power—he was his own man. When I first met Jack 30 years ago at Vesuvio’s, I was the most important person to him as we spoke. He had a wonderful ability to be

present, to listen, to share.”

Hirschman’s remarkable life and work touched so many people in North Beach with his love and generosity. “Jack was a special friend, who was well loved by everyone,” said Jerry Cimino, founder of The Beat Museum. He recalled the time Hirschman gave him a much-needed microwave oven when Jerry moved his museum from Monterey to the neighborhood in 2006. “An hour after hearing about this, here comes Jack Hirschman into our temporary space at the Live Worms Gallery carrying this big microwave—and that’s the moment I met Jack.”

Many local artists and poets were influenced and inspired by Hirschman’s support and encouragement. “A lot of the career I have is because he thought my work was so excellent, and he couldn’t believe my work wasn’t getting more attention,” added Major, who was among a few African American poets to be published during her early career. “I got my work published in three out of four publications—just like that. He also introduced me to the publisher of my first solo book of poetry.”

Hirschman, 87, was born in the Bronx borough of New York City, the son of a second-generation Russian Jewish family, his leftist father, an insurance agent and his mother, a secretary. Ever since he was a child, Hirschman wanted to be a poet, though he got his writing chops early on as a reporter. After covering sports for his high school’s newspaper, at age 15 he wrote for *The Bronx Press-Review* and *The Bronx Times*. The latter was shut down by the Kefauver Crime Committee on criminal charges of bookmaking, which almost got Hirschman and a fellow employee jailed, but the charges were dropped.

From 1951 to 1955, while working full-time at night as a copy boy for *The Associated Press*, Hirschman wrote poetry and completed a novel that was never published. After attending Long Island University’s journalism program for one year, he transferred to the City College of New York where he learned Greek and Latin and published *Fragments*, his first book of poetry. The manuscript contained three poems—“Natives,” “Focus,” and “Rebs”—that would be a harbinger of his life-long commitment to the working class as a strident Marxist.

During this period, he sent several short stories to Ernest Hemingway seeking his advice, who famously wrote back: “I can’t help you, kid. You write better than I did when I was 19. But the hell of it is, you write like me. That is no sin. But you won’t get anywhere with it.” Not long after Hemingway committed suicide in 1961, the syndicated AP published the “Letter to a Young Writer,” which was picked up by *The New York Times*. Hirschman sold a copy of the letter to a newspaper and bought a station wagon with the proceeds.

In 1954, he married Ruth Epstein, a City College classmate with whom he had two children, David and Celia. David died of leukemia in 1982; Celia resides in Oroville. The couple divorced in 1974.

After completing a master’s degree and Ph.D. at Indiana University and publishing his book of poetry, *A Correspondence of Americans*, Hirschman taught briefly at Dartmouth College. Subsequently, he moved to Los Angeles where he worked as an assistant professor of English at UCLA from 1961-1966. His students included Jim Morrison of *The Doors* and the San Francisco poet, author, and translator, Gary Gach. From 1964-1965, Hirschman was awarded a UCLA writing grant he used to visit Paris, London, and Greece. While in Greece, among other written works, he edited and translated from the French, *Artaud Anthology* (published by City Lights) that included his own work.

After returning to the U.S. in 1965, he resumed working at UCLA, where he was lauded by students for his teaching. Leading protests against the Vietnam War, Hirschman was fired for “activities against the state” and for giving “A” grades to students to help them avoid the draft.

“The universities had become the vassals of corporate America and the war-machine government—he wanted nothing to do with it,” said Byron Spooner, the former literary director of the Friends of the Library who’s writing a Hirschman biography. Spooner was a close friend and worked with him over the past 20 years. After Hirschman’s tenure as Poet Laureate, The Friends of the Library made him their Poet-in-

Residence to organize three International Poetry Festivals and the Poets 11 series of events. The organization selected three poets from each of the San Francisco's 11 supervisorial districts to present at branch libraries and subsequently published an anthology.

On the way to one of Hirschman's Poets 11 readings, Spooner recalled a moment that embodies Hirschman's humanist spirit and how he lived. "We were walking up the street, and at the time we didn't know each other that well. He stopped on the street, turned to me, and said, 'You know the greatest sin is to harden your heart.' I'll always remember that."

In 1973 Jack Hirschman arrived in San Francisco where he lived in various residential hotels in North Beach as a poet, painter, translator, and Marxist rabble-rouser, living mostly a life of poverty. During the tail end of the poetry movement known as the San Francisco Renaissance, he met poets Neeli Cherkovski, Jack Micheline and Bob Kaufman, and James Willems, editor of *Isthmus* magazine.

Between 1976 and 1989, Hirschman disseminated roughly 125,000 handmade works of cultural propaganda in the tradition of agit-prop activism. Written in English and primarily in support of the workers' movement, they were what Hirschman called "talking leaves" in the American Indian Sequoia tradition.

Calling himself "a working-class labor poet," Hirschman was a founding member of the Union of Left Writers of San Francisco and a member of the Union of Street Poets. Hirschman considered himself first a communist and, secondly, a Jew. He was an admirer of Stalin, and his interpretation of Marxist-Lenin communism made it difficult for the mainstream to embrace him.



North Beach homeless.

© CHARLES VERSAGGI

"We all argued that point with him. He stood his ground," explained Major. "I wasn't feeling communism. He could argue his point, but he didn't persuade me. But he was always respectful, thoughtful, really a man of good character."

In 1986, Hirschman became deeply involved in homelessness issues. Under President Reagan, the Mental Health Systems Act was discarded, releasing many mentally ill people to the streets, homeless and destitute. It was during this time Hirschman delivered a passionate reading of his poem "Home" to 250 homeless at the National Union of the Homeless gathered at the San Francisco Civic Center. In a newspaper account, Hirschman recalled "the changes I saw in their faces, their eyes, their weeping."

In the early 1990s, he was arrested numerous times in San Francisco while demonstrating and occupying

in it. It was a great party!"

David Meltzer, beat poet, musician, and ordained minister in the Church of Man, who died in 2016, performed the marriage ceremony. At the wedding, Hirschman sang the left-wing anthem, "The Internationale," and recited a love poem to his bride. Aggie sang to her new husband from Dylan Thomas' "Under Milkwood."

Aggie Falk wrote "Autumn Song" in 1995 when her love affair with Jack Hirschman began. "I could've written this the other day. That's what's so strange about his passing," she said. For a recent online Zoom meeting of the World Poetry Movement commemorating the poet, entitled, "Jack Hirschman: Poetry of Love and Revolution," she read her poem with moments of halting emotion and grief.

AUTUMN SONG — Agneta Falk

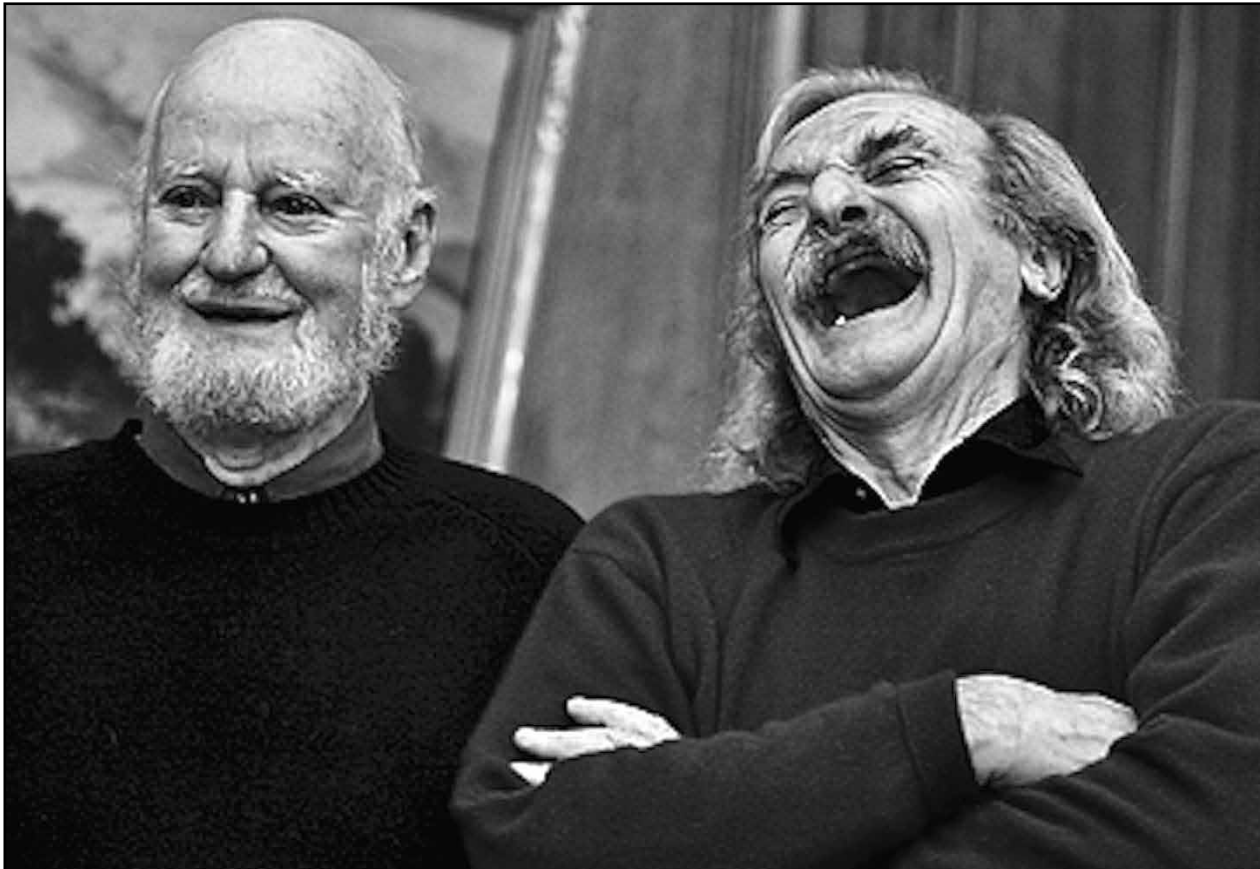
The days grow hoarse,
the colours of autumn
will soon die in the frost.
Time has passed,
gentle beast.
What remains
is the silhouette
of your laughter,
the deep joy,
slowly gathering
in the vestibule
for the final kiss.
Yet, I wait
for I don't know what,
hope the words
that burn in my throat
will catch a wind
and fly with you.

Perhaps it's poetically fitting that Hirschman's memorial display would be at the Live Worms Gallery—the former site of the venerable 91-year-old Figoni Hardware store where, among a panoply of nuts, bolts, and screws (some found only by the Figoni brothers), one could also buy live worms to bait your fishhook.

Eventually, we'll all be sustenance for generations of annelids—and some of them will be able to create poetry.

One Day — Jack Hirschman

One day I'm going to give up writing and just paint
I'm going to give up painting and just sing
I'm going to give up singing and just sit
I'm going to give up sitting and just breath
I'm going to give up breathing and just die
I'm going to give up dying and just love
I'm going to give up loving and just write



Close friends Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Jack Hirschman.

© LUKE THOMAS (WIKICOMMONS)

"I wasn't born a communist, I was made one by the things I saw, that I studied, by the things that I naturally felt." Considering Stalin's dismal humanistic record, some people wondered how Hirschman reconciled this with his own humanist philosophy and Jewish heritage.

"We used to stand on opposite street corners and yell at each other—'Ah! You old commie!' 'Ah! You fuck'n anarchist!' The left really has to get out of, get away from, using these old ideological name tags for political positions," Ferlinghetti once said.

"Jack admired the role that Stalin played in fighting the Nazis in World War II," said Gonzalez, who was close to Hirschman's politics. "I don't think he was trying to promote Stalin or hold him up...some people just couldn't hear that because we'd just been so accustomed to thinking about the crimes. And I understood that."

vacant buildings as part of activities of the Communist Labor Party in support of the fight against homelessness.

In 1999, Hirschman married his love of poetry and revolution with a kindred spirit who gave his heart a lasting home. "What attracted me to him was his enormous kindness. We both believed in love and kindness and that in a sense is what united us," said Falk. "He had an enormous, wonderful sense of humor. When you can share a sense of humor with somebody, then for me it's special."

"Aggie and Jack got married in the backyard of a house I was renting in the Mission—they were so very much in love," recalled Gonzalez. "Jack was wearing a sweater. 'You can't wear that,' I said. 'You should be wearing a suit.' So, Jack borrowed an elegant double-breasted suit from my roommate and got married



Jack Hirschman and Agneta Falk at Caffé Trieste.

© ALESSANDRO ACTIS (WIKICOMMONS)

JACK HIRSCHMAN ¡PRESENTE!

“I’ve said that I believe that everyone is a poet and that one of the central reasons I’ve fought as a revolutionary is to change not only the material conditions of mankind, but in so doing, to liberate that idea, that everyone is a poet into human consciousness. Why? Because language is indeed the house of being, and its most concentrated expression is poetry, and poetry is the truth of being, and that truth which I call the most powerful thing in human expression is precisely so because it defies and deconstructs power...” — Jack Hirschman

HOME (excerpt)*

by Jack Hirschman

Winter has come.
In doorways, in alleys, at the top
of church steps,
under cardboard, under rag-blankets
or, if lucky, in plastic sacks,
another day of humiliation,
sleeping,
freezing,
isolated, divided, penniless,
jobless, wheezing, dirty,
skin wrapped around cold bones,
that’s us, that’s us in the USA.

*Recited to 250 homeless people at the National Union of Homeless, San Francisco Civic Center.

PATH

by Jack Hirschman

Go to your broken heart.
If you think you don’t have one, get one.
To get one, be sincere.
Learn sincerity of intent by letting
life enter because you’re helpless, really,
to do otherwise.
Even as you try escaping, let it take you
and tear you open
like a letter sent
like a sentence inside
you’ve waited for all your life
though you’ve committed nothing.
Let it send you up.
Let it break you, heart.
Broken-heartedness is the beginning
of all real reception.
The ear of humility hears beyond the gates.
See the gates opening.
Feel your hands going akimbo on your hips,
your mouth opening like a womb
giving birth to your voice for the first time.
Go singing whirling into the glory
of being ecstatically simple.
Write the poem.



Procession heading north on Columbus Avenue.

© DENNIS HEARNE



Agneta Falk, third from left, leads memorial procession in Washington Square Park.

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TRANSPORTATION REPORT

by Howard Wong, AIA, Committee Chair
howard.wong@thd.org

39 Coit Bus Chronicles

Over the decades, the 39 Coit bus had beloved regular drivers, whose friendly interactions with frequent riders, like famed *Chronicle* columnist Charles McCabe, created a village-like sense of community. In a 2013 *Chronicle* column, Carl Nolte memorialized ‘Geography John’ (real name John R. Nelson), a bearded, free-spirited driver, who reportedly had a doctorate in geography and operated the 39 bus almost like an independent service, sometimes taking passengers to their front doors or Mooney’s Irish Pub on upper Grant Avenue. His German Shepherd named ‘Arrow’ often rode shotgun with him, as a “deterrent to crime.”

Recently, I asked a driver if he was a regular on the 39. “Just filling in on Tuesdays and Thursdays,” he said. “It’s hard to get assigned to the 39 because senior drivers really like this route.” Apparently, the 39’s collegial spirit is none the worse for wear, not to mention bucolic views and congenial customers—a real dream job, especially if Geography John’s personal services’ approach still holds. Well, at least partially.

39 Coit Bus Notes

Riding the 39 in the last weeks, I’ve bumped into a neighbor returning from her Safeway shopping trip and taking the scenic route via Coit Tower, as well as other familiar faces, workers, tourists, and sometimes no riders at all. Despite the sixth lowest ridership numbers in the Municipal Railway (Muni) system, the 39 Coit bus is nevertheless essential for meeting Muni’s policy of every resident being within three blocks of a bus stop. Without public transit, seniors and disabled persons living on steep hills would feel stranded. The 39 experience goes beyond functionality, traversing scenic vistas, landmark sights, and great neighborhoods. The 180-degree U-turn atop Union/Montgomery Streets is a sight to behold. Safeway, Trader Joe’s, Pier 39, Joe DiMaggio Playground, Washington Square, Coit Tower, the Filbert Steps, and Grace Marchant Gardens are destinations for a carefree and car-free neighborhood sojourn.

39 Coit Bus (9am–7pm): <https://www.sfmta.com/routes/39-coit>

IN PRAISE OF THE 39



39 Coit bus coming down Union Street.

© HOWARD WONG

Muni Recovery Plan

Muni’s initial plans were not to restore all pre-pandemic service levels. Due to revenue drops and unsustainable funding, only 85% of pre-pandemic service hours were expected to return by 2022. Then, in July, the Board of Supervisors requested a plan for 100% Muni restoration. Already restored locally are the 39 Coit bus, cable cars, F-Line, some evening hours, and all late-night Owl services. Not restored are the 41-Union, 47-Van Ness, 3-Jackson, E-Line, and pre-pandemic schedules. Citing the absence of new/large funding sources, Muni’s proposal for 100% restoration consists of three scenarios: (1) Familiar Network that restores suspended routes but reduces frequency on core routes; (2) Frequent Network that increases frequency on major corridors but leaves many routes suspended; (3) Hybrid Network that balances the Familiar and Frequent scenarios.

Even prior to the pandemic, Muni’s Transit Effectiveness and Muni Forward projects, which were intended to improve reliability and transform the sys-

tem, led to service cuts, eliminating bus lines (like the 15-Kearny bus), shortening evening/service hours, and lessening frequency. With receipt of \$1 billion in federal Covid support funding, Muni has sustained operations without layoffs. Keeping in mind San Francisco’s Transit-First Policy and the needs of its citizenry, SFMTA should prioritize Service-First.

Before overhauling the Muni system, which would require a robust public process, SFMTA should first restore 100% of pre-pandemic bus/rail routes—by implementing an augmented Weekend Service plan. SFMTA has stated that sufficient funding exists to bring back 85% of pre-pandemic service hours in February 2022. Since Weekend Service hours are about 66% of weekday hours, 19% of funds can augment basic Weekend Service—with the strategic addition of express/peak-period routes, increased frequency, and longer hours. With all routes restored, we can then begin the dialogue about new funding for public transit.



TELEGRAPH HILL COYOTES ON THE MOVE

by Janet Kessler

Coyotes have extensive territories. Our Telegraph Hill coyotes’ territory runs from Coit Tower to Fisherman’s Wharf, Ghirardelli Square, and beyond to Fort Mason, including all the neighborhoods in-between!

I’ve worked out the territories here in San Francisco to be between 1.5 and 2.5 square miles each, and each is “owned” by just one family. Coyotes keep other coyotes out of their territories, which controls the population naturally—this is what their territoriality is about. Only one family has ever lived in this northeastern corner of the City since I started my observations in 2007. Most youngster coyotes seem to disperse out of the City going south, but four members of our 2017 litter took over existing territories within the City itself: in the Presidio, at Lands End, in West Portal, and one replaced her parents here on Telegraph Hill. In my book, that’s a highly successful litter!

If you’d like to find out more about coyote territories in the City and about my work gathering this information, please visit my blog, coyoteyipps.com and search for “Territories and Population in San Francisco.”



Current Telegraph Hill matriarch, Cai2, near Ghirardelli Square.

© JANET KESSLER

FIVE MYTHS ABOUT PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AND WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TODAY!

by Melissa Dong Mountain, Education Advocate
President, 2nd District of the CA State PTA
Board member, Telegraph Hill Dwellers

When I first stepped foot inside the building of our eldest child's public elementary school, I had no knowledge of "PTA" outside of what is portrayed in the movies and shared in the media. It did not take me long to realize that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was the best way for me to get involved at our public school.

So why would someone without kids consider joining a PTA? Let's take a step back and consider why we're addressing parent organizations in *The Semaphore*. We know THD members are advocates for our neighborhood and care about the wellbeing of its children and families. It's also important to understand the difference between PTA and PTO (parent teacher organizations).

PTO is a generic term for parent teacher organizations and essentially refers to an independent group that supports its particular school community. PTAs also serve individual school communities—and, additionally, are membership-based units that are part of statewide and national PTA organizations. PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy group in the country. (Legislation for child labor laws, arts in education, and the very existence of kindergarten are in part thanks to the PTA.) And who doesn't support PTAs' mission "to engage and empower families and communities to advocate for all children?"

Geographically, the public schools within THD's boundaries each have PTOs, and the closest PTA schools are Sherman Elementary, Marina Middle School, and Galileo High School. Supporting local public schools is possible, of course, without joining a

parent organization. Community members find avenues for volunteering in classrooms or after-school programs, attending school-sponsored events, and giving to philanthropic campaigns. Since PTAs are member-based organizations, becoming an official PTA member not only supports a school community, it also ensures you have a voice in PTA's goal of a quality education and nurturing environment for every child.

At the school-site PTA level when serving as PTA president at my children's public elementary, we created a morning dropoff procedure that ultimately provided a safer environment for children, families, and neighbors. PTA members worked with City government to enact various measures and design a protocol for families to drop off children safely and efficiently while reducing traffic jams.

The overall PTA organization is built to support volunteers in gaining skills for advocacy work. Unit (or school-based) PTAs in San Francisco are supported by the Second District PTA of California, one of 27 geographical PTA districts in our state. When CA PTA takes a position on issues or legislation (like SB793, recently signed into law banning the sale of flavored tobacco products), district and unit PTAs may then

Five Myths About Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)

- 1. You should have a child at the school in order to join the PTA.**
FALSE! PTA membership is open, without discrimination, to anyone who believes in and supports the mission, purposes, and principles of PTA.
- 2. You can only join PTA in-person at an event or at the school.**
FALSE! Many PTAs now offer an online option to make it quick and easy for people to join.
- 3. You can only be a member of one PTA.**
FALSE! There is no limit to the number of PTAs you can support. Dues typically range from \$5 to \$20, and membership is renewed annually. San Francisco has more than 60 PTAs across the city.
- 4. PTA is a social club for moms.**
FALSE! PTA is an almost 125-year-old advocacy association open to everyone! PTA members are parents, guardians, family members, caregivers, students, teachers, administrators, and neighbors from the community.
- 5. Joining a PTA means I need to volunteer.**
FALSE! Just joining PTA helps serve and support kids. Becoming a member ensures your voice is counted and elevates the voices of those who care about all our children!

educate PTA members about the legislative priorities and goals related to the care and protection of children and youth.

San Francisco has more than 60 PTAs and numerous other PTOs in its public schools. As an education advocate, I encourage each of us (with kids or not) to find a path to actively support the wellbeing of families and children in our neighborhood and city. ♦

NEXT VILLAGE SF

by Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director and Janet Crane, Founder and Board Chair

Twenty years ago, a group of neighbors on Boston's Beacon Hill pioneered the concept of a Village, as they collaborated to make it easier for them to age in place in their homes as they grew older. An article on that Village published in the *New York Times* inspired a grassroots movement across the United States and moved Jonee Levy and Janet Crane to found NEXT Village SF 12 years ago.

Now there are 350 active and developing Villages

in this country, and the concept is spreading abroad. The Village movement creates a forward-thinking, neighbor-helping-neighbor community that includes all generations and empowers members to continue to live independently.

The goal at Next Village SF is to enrich, enhance, and nourish the lives of seniors in our north-east neighborhoods. Volunteers are the key, helping members with various day-to-day tasks that can be a challenge as one gets older. Here are just a few volunteer-to-member services we recently provided.

- Installed a lock box on the outside of a member's

apartment building so that volunteers and others could gain access. Our member could no longer get down three flights of stairs to open the door, and her building had no buzzer to let visitors in.

- Provided tech support to members who got new devices and needed help connecting to their internet.
- Arranged for a Public Health nurse to come to several homebound members' residences to give them Covid vaccinations.
- Helped a member who was moving to shift items on higher shelves down to the counter so they could be packed, ensuring that the member didn't have to take risks by climbing up and down a ladder.
- Drove to Kaiser on Geary to pick up a prescription that could not be mailed.

Next Village SF has a new office at 704 Filbert Street (@ Columbus Avenue). It's open Monday through Friday, 11 am to 2 pm. Tuesdays offer conversation about the news as well as games.

We also keep people (50 and above) connected and engaged through social, cultural, and educational activities, about 40 each month, including reading circles, art, French and Italian, writing, meditation, and stress busters, some in collaboration with District 2 University. November brings improv classes, dance and live music groups, and urban outings.

There are also individual events, some pertaining to health and wellness. The best way to learn about activities is via the events calendar on the organization's website. People can sign up for our newsletter and weekly Sunday reminders as well.

For more information, please call us at 415-888-2868, email info@nextvillagesf.org, or visit our website at www.nextvillagesf.org. ♦



NEXTVillage office at Columbus and Filbert.

© JUDY IRVING

KIDS CORNER

by Sarah Kliban



© TRACY ANDREASSEN

Jude Andreassen—9

If you became president, what's the first thing you would do?

Try to stop global warming. I've heard some bad things about it, so I thought that would be a good thing to stop.

What do you do with an adult that you would like to do by yourself?

Schoolwork. I don't like being bothered while I'm doing my schoolwork, so I can focus. I want to do it alone, so I don't have any distractions.

What's something you would change in the neighborhood?

I would make it so there would be more trees on my block. I like watching birds. I have one tree near me, but there isn't one across the street. Maybe five more trees on my side and eight on the other side so I can see more trees and more birds.

If you came across a genie, what would you wish for?

No coronavirus, so we wouldn't have to deal with all of this.



© MAUREN DOWNEY

Colin Downey Chiko—11

If you became president, what's the first thing you would do?

Not become president! I do not want to be president!

What do you do with an adult that you

would like to do by yourself?

Have the day off to go around the City and do stuff...have a little independence. I'd take BART to school in Oakland (cross under the ocean and back), get back home, and do stuff there. If it was the weekend, I'd go to a couple friends' houses that I've never been to. I don't know where any of my friends live, but I could ask them.

What's something you would change in the neighborhood?

A little less of things you don't want to look at. Like when you turn the street and see things you wish you didn't see. Or people. Or signs. Or this or that. Probably for the rest of the City as well. I'll leave it at that.

If you came across a genie, what would you wish for?

Probably to be immortal, like a god. I just have to be invincible—not powerful. Just sit around for the rest of eternity watching over everything. Just taking a peek at everything. I don't have to influence everything, just put my opinion out about what's happening. Kinda normal, but I'm a little immortal and invincible.



© TRACY ANDREASSEN

Clare Andreassen—7

If you became president, what's the first thing you would do?

Honestly, I think I would agree with my brother. Try to stop climate change. I really like nature and snowy stuff specifi-

cally. Climate change has had a huge hit on the snowy biomes out there.

What do you do with an adult that you would like to do by yourself?

There is one place called 'Ring Mountain'—it's a hike. There's this big rock that's split in half. My mom was kind of "I don't know about adventuring there." I'd just really like to explore that place.

What's something you would change in the neighborhood?

I want there to be more monkey bars at Joe DiMaggio because I've gotten really into monkey bars right now. Maybe a seesaw there, too.

If you came across a genie, what would you wish for?

I really want a dog! I like Golden Retrievers or German Shepherds. I kinda like big ones, but I could accept a medium one. At least not a small dog. We might get a poodle because they don't shed a lot. I can accept a poodle. Medium or big.



© GEMMA ADDISON

Bonnie Addison Burns—12

If you became president, what's the first thing you would do?

Get rid of a bunch of ridiculous laws that are kind of stupid and put a lot of people in danger.

What do you do with an adult that you would like to do by yourself?

I could go on the bus on my own. I know I'm capable of it. It would be fun, especially with a friend, because it would make travel a lot easier, and my friends don't live around here.

What's something you would change in the neighborhood?

There are a lot of empty buildings around here. It's interesting to come up with theories of what they could be used for. It would be nice to have new stores, maybe thrift stores or clothing stores. They would be interesting to look in.

If you came across a genie, what would you wish for?

If I could wish for anything, I'd probably wish for global warming to stop. Or probably to have some sort of mind-reading ability. Shapeshifting would be cool—but probably global warming to stop.





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VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2021

by Mary Lipian, Recording Secretary
mary.lipian@thd.org

July 2021

The THD Board agreed to participate in the annual “National Night Out” on August 3, designed to promote safer neighborhoods through community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie with visits from emergency personnel from the San Francisco Police Department.

THD agreed to host a table at the North Beach Farmers’ Market to promote THD membership, sell merchandise, and answer questions about THD. It will be staffed by THD board members.

The Social Committee presented its plans to hold a virtual THD event on August 16, 2021: “A Conversation with District Attorney Chesa Boudin and Chief of Police Bill Scott” on the future of San Francisco, to be moderated by Joe Eskenazi of *Mission Local*.

The Transportation Committee shared the good news that Coit 39 bus service is resuming.

August 2021

THD Summer Recess – No Board Meeting

September 2021

It was announced that Michael Rothmann is the new Parks and Trees Chair, and Carmen White might

become the new Waterfront Chair.

A THD “meet-up” event took place on September 9 from 6 to 8 pm at Belle Cora in North Beach in the outdoor shared space, offering a great opportunity for neighbors to meet in person. It was well-attended, with more than 40 RSVPs.

THD is welcoming The 7 Fingers circus group to the neighborhood by reserving seats for THD members to preview performances at Club Fugazi on October 2. The special THD ticket price is \$29, and members will sit together in the Tiara Balcony. The Board discussed a pre-show event hosted by THD at Chief Sullivan’s.



FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

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www.friendsofwashingtonsquare.com



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**TREASURER'S
REPORT**

by Nick Ferris
nick.ferris@thd.org

Your current interlocutor writes his report on THD's finances from the beautiful Greek island of Crete, where he is beginning a pandemic-delayed honeymoon. Unlike the near-term future of his finances, Telegraph Hill Dwellers remains in a strong position halfway through the budget year (April 2021 through March 2022) with a positive net income of \$2,187.40. It's largely due to generous donations from members and slightly reduced operating costs for line items like social events, due to COVID.

Going forward, we're beginning to do more in-person events, and these savings will only enable us to do more fun activities for the neighborhood. Please make sure to follow our new Social Chair, Kate Kaehler, who is already organizing lots of great events.

Last, we're always looking for new and creative ways to support the neighborhood. THD has funds dedicated for this, and so, if you have ideas or suggestions, please get in touch with me at nick.ferris@thd.org.



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Financial Secretary/Membership: Andy Katz
Historian: Nancy Shanahan
Past President: Stan Hayes
Semaphore Editor: Cap Caplan

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Don Raichle
Termeh Yeghiazarian
Julia Martin Murphy
Nadya Williams

Term: 2021-2023

Patrice Ignacio Moll
Katie Hopkins
Kate Koehler
Greg Giachino

THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Join a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Art & Culture: Open
Budget: Nick Ferris nick.ferris@thd.org
Membership: Andy Katz THDmembership@gmail.com
Oral History Project: Judy Irving judy.irving@thd.org
Transportation: Howard Wong howard.wong@thd.org
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Waterfront: Howard Wong howard.wong@thd.org
Communications: Al Fontes, Katie Hopkins, Sarah Kliban al.fontes@thd.org

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE MEETS last Thursdays
of each month. Call for time and location.
986-7070 or 563-3494 or 391-5652.

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Central Police District Community Advisory Board: Daryl Babbitt
Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods: Al Fontes
Friends of Washington Square Liaison: Don Raichle
Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group Member: Open



WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

There's no better way to be connected to your neighborhood and be a voice of the hill than by joining Telegraph Hill Dwellers, today.

Join at THD.org. If you'd prefer to have a brochure and sign-up form mailed to you, please send an email to membership@thd.org. Already a member? Give one as a gift!

Membership includes:

- A one-year subscription to news & events via email and a quarterly paper, *The Semaphore*.
- Opportunities to be active in your community. Your passion likely aligns to one of many committees.
- Social and Art & Culture events throughout the year – attend and contribute!

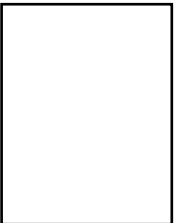
Annual Dues:

Individuals..... \$35
Households..... \$50
Seniors (65 and older)..... \$25
Senior Households..... \$40

Join now or give the gift of membership at THD.org or email membership@thd.org.



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THE SEMAPHORE

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The Semaphore

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